

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 are pending in the present application. Claims 6 and 11-16 have been amended and Claims 17-24 have been added. Claims 1-5 are allowed.

Claims 12-15 are objected to because of informalities. Claim 12 has been amended to depend from base claim 6, which has structure to support claim 12. Similarly, claims 13-15 have been amended to depend from claim 12. The objections are believed to be overcome.

Claims 6 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C 102(e) as being anticipated by Karpik.

Claim 6 has been amended to recite, amongst other things, that the support is connected to a ground-engaging element such that the support and the ground-engaging element rotate together about a substantially vertical axis to steer the vehicle.

Although not explicitly shown in Karpik because the ground-engaging element is not shown, a person skilled in the art would recognize that the support 36a, which connects to the suspension elements of the vehicle, does not rotate with a ground-engaging element to steer the vehicle as is claimed in claim 6. The type of front suspension system shown in Karpik is also described in the present application. As stated in the present application at paragraph 8, (with reference to Figs 39 & 40) upper and lower A-arms (suspension elements) 452, 454 are connected to front leg 458 (same as Karpik's spindle housing 36a) through pins (or bolts) 466, 468, thus, front leg 458 cannot rotate about a substantially vertical axis. Therefore, front leg 458, nor Karpik's spindle housing 36a, can be used to turn a ground engaging member. Instead, a steering shaft 470 extends through a hole 472 bored through front leg 458. Steering shaft 470 is connected to handlebars 474 through a mechanical linkage 476. As handlebars 474 are rotated, steering shaft 470 rotates in the direction of the arrow 478 shown in Figure 40. Since steering shaft 470 is connected to ski 464 through a pin or bolt 480, as steering shaft 470 rotates, ski 464 turns. Although no equivalent to the steering shaft 470 is shown in Karpik, it is well known that the suspension system of Karpik also requires a steering shaft connected to a ski at a bottom end thereof and to handlebars at a top end thereof. This is also

recognized by the hollow spindle housings 36a and 36b and because Karpik describes them as spindle housings because they house the spindles which rotate within them. Karpik's front suspension is conventional and well known in the art of snowmobiles and cannot anticipate claim 6 because the spindle housing 36a does not rotate with a ski.

Claims 7-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Karpik in view of Nakazawa. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

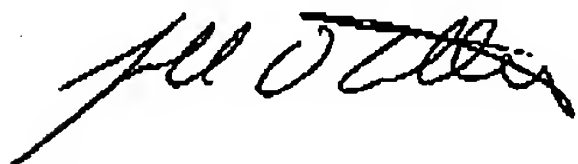
Claims 7-16 and new claims 17-20 recite additional features of the present invention and are believed to be allowable for the same reasons discussed above with respect to independent claim 6 and the additional features found therein.

New claims 21-24 are also believed to be patentable.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the above mentioned rejections are respectfully requested.

Should the examiner believe that anything further is desirable to place the application in better condition for allowance, the examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the phone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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